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Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc.

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A 75th Anniversary Issue
Vol. LIV, No. 1, Summer 1987

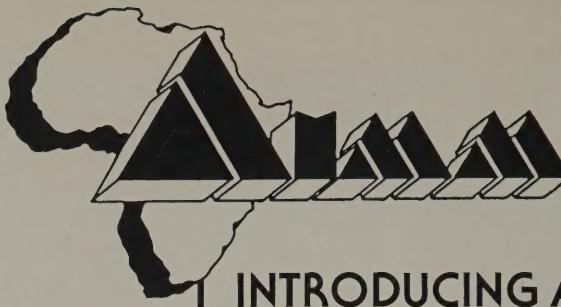
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In one sense this issue is a collection of incidents in the life of our Mission team. The articles are compiled from reports or reflections on a few happenings out of the many and varied experiences that make up a missionary's life. But they are not "incidental," if one defines the term as occurring merely by chance or of minor consequence. Rather they are some of the strands that God is weaving in a pattern that may not be always clear to us. Nevertheless they add to the tapestry that will someday display His glory. In the meantime, as for the past seventy-five years, AIMM persons seek to be faithful in their various opportunities to fulfill the Great Commission while introducing others to our Wonderful Savior and Lord.



Shamwana school choir, Zaire



INTRODUCING AIMM . . .

AFRICA INTER-MENNOMITE MISSION is an evangelical partnership through which six North American Mennonite denominations engage in a united effort to fulfill the Great Commission on the continent of Africa. Basic objectives are to plant the Church in areas where it is not established; to nurture the Church where it exists; and to partner with the African Church in ongoing ministries of witness and service.

To this end AIMM sends committed Christians to live, learn, love, and serve among the peoples of Africa. As stewards of the Gospel, AIMM seeks to bring wholeness to persons, families, and communities, through evangelism, discipleship, Christian education, compassion, practical assistance, and outreach.

AIMM workers serve in five areas of Africa: Zaire, Lesotho, Botswana, Burkina Faso and the Transkei.

Persons interested in ministering with AIMM should have a deep personal faith commitment to Jesus Christ, a basic knowledge of the Bible, involvement in a local Christian congregation, reasonable health and emotional maturity, adequate skills training and appropriate spiritual gifts for one's area of work, some experience serving in one's own culture, and a willingness to adapt to a new cultural setting as necessary. Terms of service vary from two to four years. Willingness to serve for a series of terms is preferred since learning to relate and communicate cross-culturally requires time.

Together in Ministry

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission is a partnership of the Evangelical Mennonite Church, the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren, the General Conference Mennonite Church, the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, the Mennonite Brethren, and the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference.



Cover Photo composite: (from top left) Dan Petersen, Burkina Faso; Orodara market; Cheba and the Old Man, Kotoura; Baptism at Nyanga, Zaire; Building at Kalonda; Laundry day in the Transkei; Child of Botswana; Hillside in Lesotho



Rick Derksen

On December 2 three pastors and I left Kalonda for an eventful thirteen-day trip to seven church districts in the northern half of the Kasai. Pastor Lupaya, Pastor Tshikandji and Pastor Kabesele and I travelled on three motorcycles.

The most dramatic event was a hold-up on the second day. At one o'clock in the afternoon we were on our way from Kabambaie to Djoko Punda. Pastor Tshikandji got somewhat ahead of us when he was held up by two armed bandits. One was masked and had a pistol. The other had a knife. They forced him off his motorcycle, frisked him, fired a shot above his head to frighten him and told him to get lost, which he did. He started back toward us knowing we were coming.

It was at that point that we appeared on the scene. I saw him coming on foot so I stopped. He told me there were armed bandits ahead and we should escape. As the masked gunman came around the bend in the road I turned my motorcycle around hoping that Kabesele would do the same thing and the four of us could get away on the two motorcycles. Unfortunately, that plan failed when Kabasele hit a tree stump and fell with his motorcycle in the tall grass.

I decided that if we were going to stick together I would have to get off my motorcycle along with Lupaya who was riding on the back. When I turned around the masked bandit was standing about five metres (15 feet) away, his gun pointing in my direction. He asked for money but I didn't respond. He asked me for my motorcycle keys and I took them from the cycle and put them in my pocket. Then he asked for my goggles and I decided I had better give him something so I took them off and put them on the ground as he told me to.

adventure in evangelism

Rick Derksen

I was finding it all rather hard to believe. I tried to remember what happened next in some of those old "westerns." I couldn't remember. We decided that discretion was the better part of valor. What happened next was that we all took off on foot into the bush and then stopped to pray. Our prayers, at that moment, were rather fervent. To make a long story short, God protected us. The bandits escaped into the bush after stealing some things and we recovered our motorcycles. They had taken Tshikandji's keys and punctured both of my tires. But we managed to hot wire Tshikandji's motorcycle and fix the tires in the next village, all by nine o'clock that night.

We continued our trip the next day, thanking and praising God. We visited Kabambaie, Djoko Punda, a newly planted parish at Luebo, Mweka, Illebo, Mitshibu, Banga, and Mamanya. The purpose of the trip was to encourage the churches in these districts. It was one of the best trips I have been on. God blessed us in many different ways in both the churches we visited and we ourselves were encouraged.

Rick Derksen directs the Evangelism Department of the Zaire Mennonite Church.



Sharing in Hope

It was wall-to-wall people, three hundred in a three and a half hour, wide awake session. There were the usual songs that swept the throng and the fervent prayers for rain and for peace.

The first hint that this would be a day to remember came when 23 young people presented themselves for baptism. With the prayer of the pastor still ringing in their ears they were dispatched in the care of an evangelist to the river for immersion. The congregation would wait for their triumphant return.

Then two members who had been subject to church discipline were called forward. They knelt and were prayed for. Elders stepped out to take them by the hand, leading them back to their places in the congregation as a mark of their restoration to the fellowship.

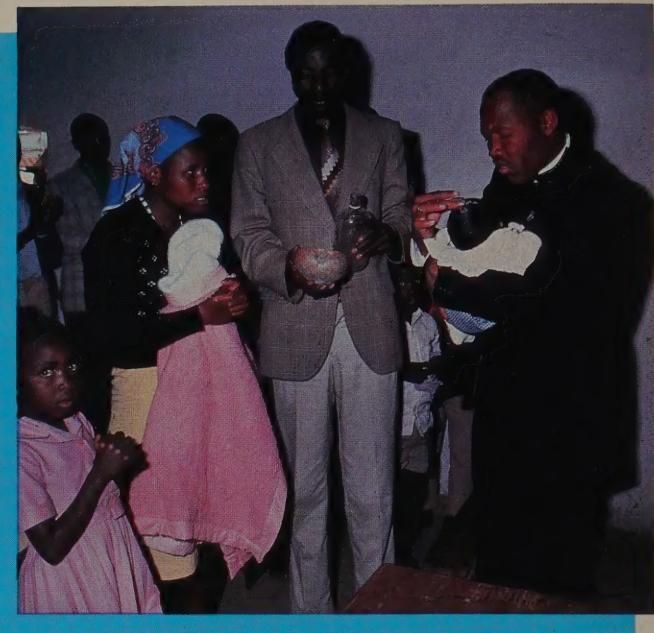
It was announced that several young people had started a Sunday morning class for school age children. "Would they please present themselves to the congregation?" the pastor requested. A tide of children began to

double dip day

Jonathan Larson



Praising the Lord



Consecration of infant, Botswana

move rhythmically forward to the tune of a familiar chant. Formed into ranks, eighty children lustily sang an anthem and then settled themselves once again in the sanctuary.

"Were there any in attendance," asked the worship leader, "who wished to be prayed for?" About sixty participants, young and old, men and women, arranged themselves in rows, kneeling with hands clasped in prayer. Some had obvious physical afflictions, others belabored hearts. Elders rose and moved through the crowd of seekers, laying hands on each and praying.

But the most moving moment came when parents were invited to bring their children for blessing. Eight babies were brought forward. Eight mothers stood to say they sought God's hand upon their children. And we were confronted with a visual image of the brokenness of our people. There was only one father who appeared. For whatever reasons fathers were unwilling or unable to share this moment with the mothers and their little ones. In a moment of inspiration, the pastor proceeded to give us a beautiful lesson in community. He called out of the pews leading men in the church to stand in for the missing fathers. Only when those partial families had been made "complete" was the blessing conferred and then punctuated by a swelling chant, "Let the children come to me"

Call it a double-dip. Call it what you will but it was a jumbo people-building event that Sunday at the Spiritual Healing Church in Gaborone. How ordinary all these elements are in our churches. They recur periodically in various forms, but on that day surrounded by the cadence of song, the familiar words of Scripture and prayer, and my friends at the Spiritual Healing Church, I saw them as signs.

*"Then we shall be where we would be,
Then we shall be what we should be;
Things that are not now, nor could be,
Soon shall be our own."*

A new word has entered our lexicon: tinny gas. This slice of our history is an important indicator of the forces at work not only in our town of Gaborone or this country, but across the face of what has come to be called the South—the countries that scrabble for the crumbs on the floor below the table.

In the next door community of Bontleng (*meaning 'at the Place Beautiful'*) a mother brought her children to the clinic. In the milling crowd of young and old, one child, a girl, went astray. When the mother began her frantic search, street urchins reported seeing a certain woman taking the child to her nearby home. The woman was known to the community as a traditional doctor, a *Sangoma*. This touched off hysteria with the mother and her neighbors who believed that the *Sangoma* intended to use the child in some gruesome ritual to produce medicine for a client. The *Sangoma* soon found herself under seige as an angry crowd gathered outside, pelting her house with stones.

The police came to search the house. From this point on the truth becomes very slippery indeed. Some say the police were unable to enter the house because it was sealed with a hex and only when a second traditional doctor was called to undo the spell were the police able to enter. These rumors say the child was found locked in an inner wardrobe. The government media contend, however, that no child was found, but that the *Sangoma* was removed to protective custody. The child was later discovered four miles away in the house of a deranged 16 year old girl. In any event, the child was restored to her mother but that did not mollify the frightened and angry crowds who believed that leading government figures were protecting the *Sangoma* for murky personal reasons.

The bewildered and inexperienced police soon found themselves skirmishing with bands of residents and students who had joined the fray. The officers began to spray tear gas (tinnygas) canisters liberally, firing rubber bullets to quell the mayhem. The drama was further heightened when the *Sangoma*'s

house and two vehicles were set ablaze. Coursing everywhere were the rumors that thrive in a climate of uncertainty and fear. An old friend of mine in the area said he had never seen such display of intemperance and rage among the Batswana before. Indeed, the spectacle has come as a shock to a nation whose culture is steeped in reserve, respect and peaceful settlement of grievances. My friend groped helplessly for an explanation and finally took refuge in a common proverb, "*Di ngwaga di fetogile,*" in other words, "the years have changed."

In the aftermath of these events which brought a new word to our Setswana lexicon, there is apprehension that some emotional threshold had been breached and this society "can't go home again." In some radical way these people find themselves exiled from their age old home and have landed in a not-so-brave new world.

Recently in a Christian Education workshop with friends from the Independent Churches we discussed this loss of the past in the corrosive present as it relates to the training of children. That first evening we adjourned with little hope. In the morning my roommate, an evangelist of the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion, told me that he had had a dream. This dream contained a message to us in our dilemma. Later that day he shared with the group his dream, which was a simple verbal message, "*Karabo ke Jesu,*" literally, "the answer is Jesus." The urgent tone of his voice as he spoke would not let me dismiss the message as trite. Indeed, the gospel must also mean the incalculable cultural loss can be compensated in Christ.

If the Gospel offers nothing to the culturally desolate is it Good News at all? In some ways it comes down to this: What does the Gospel say to "tinnygas"?

Jonathan Larson

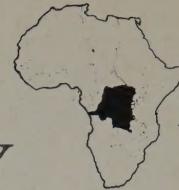


Spiritual Healing Church center, Mahalapye

Jonathan Larson works with African Independent Churches while his wife Mary Kay also assists the Ministry of Health. The Larsons are supported through AIMM by the G. C. Commission on Overseas Mission. In Botswana AIMM works in a relationship with MCC called Mennonite Ministries.

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot . . . a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance . . ." Ecclesiastes 3

CARING THROUGH SORROW



Zaire

Death is a frequent visitor in this land where health services are minimal or inaccessible and where an adequate understanding of good health and safety practices has yet to find its "season." Death has touched us closely.

Kalenga Kasanda, next door neighbor, close friend and church worker in the Department of Evangelism and Church Life, drowned when the boat he was in capsized while crossing the Kasai River. The accident, due to carelessness on the part of the man operating the ferry boat brought much grief and suffering to the ten to twenty families who waited in vain for loved ones to come home the night of March 12, 1986. The following week was one of sitting up with Kalenga's family and other friends at night while searching for his body during the day. Failure to find the body simply made the sudden death harder to accept. Kalenga's wife and four young children have since moved to another village where his parents live. Following their custom, his father's family is now responsible for the children. It still feels lonely, very lonely here at Kalonda without them.

Another neighbor, Mua Mukendi, also called "Koka," died in September following a battle with uterine cancer. She had gone to Kananga with hopes of successful treatment at the Tshikaji hospital there. The cancer was too far advanced; however, after sixteen days she was flown back to Tshikapa on Monday afternoon, September 15. While she could recognize her friends she wasn't strong enough to raise her head. Two and a half hours after returning to her home at Kalonda she died. More nights were spent sitting up with friends and family singing and mourning. Koka left six children ranging in ages from 7 to 21. She was thirty-nine years old.

Koka was a happy, dear person with a sense of humor. She usually was the leader of the ladies in the baby welcoming home ceremonies for new mothers. Many AIMM missionaries will remember her husband, Mukendi Paul who worked for many years as chauffeur, later helped Glenn Rocke as a mason and worked in a variety of ways for Steve Nelson in the Kalonda construction projects.

Marilyn and Rick Derksen, General Conference supported workers, have been based at Kalonda. Marilyn is involved with midwifery and health care.

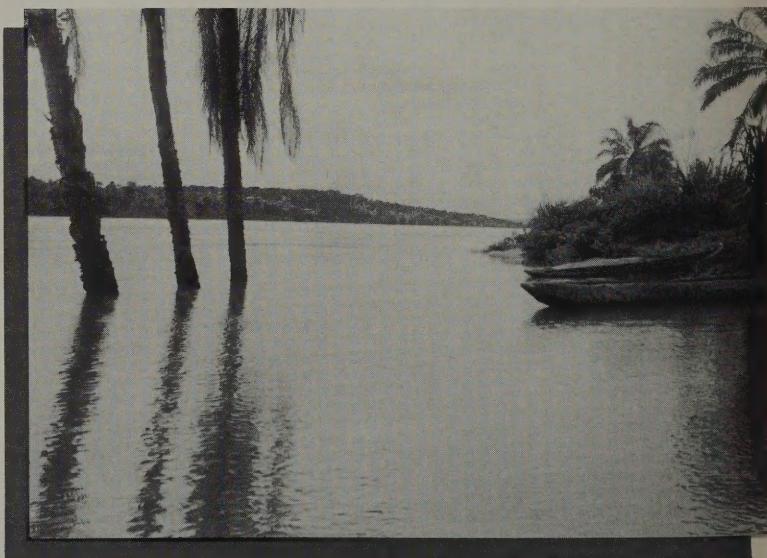
Sponsored by the Evangelical Mennonite Churches, Steve Nelson and his wife Pat have completed their first term with AIMM. Steve is responsible for building and reconstruction at Kalonda.



Kalenga Kasanda

a time to weep

from reports by Marilyn Derksen &
Steve Nelson



Kasai River near Kalonda

I thought it would be a much slower pace, but it seems we have kept a busy life-style even in Africa. There is always plenty to do. As we were sent to Botswana my role was to look after the family needs and be a support to Garry in his ministry.

A day does not go by in our home when someone doesn't come over to use the phone or come for a cup of tea or coffee or for a meal and the night. We keep very busy with guests in our home and we enjoy it.

We had the privilege of hosting two women who were doing a week-long seminar entitled "Women and Evangelism" for the Independent Churches. It was a great week. Rev. Rosario Batlle from Nairobi and Sister Esther from Egypt led the ladies' seminars. We had 33 women out who were eager to learn. It was exciting to see the African women dig in their Bibles for Scripture references and answers. Later in the seminar the ladies were trying to apply these Biblical principles to their daily lives. The African women were excited to learn.



Diane & Garry Janzen with Israel Motswasele, Church leader

a mother's role

Diane Janzen

I was asked to lead a session on teaching Sunday School for a women's seminar on Christian Education. This was a new venture for me. We come from a world of materialism and so it takes some creativity to be able to do a Sunday School program with next to no materials. These people cannot afford them.

I was asked by the interdenominational fellowship in Francistown to teach Sunday School there. After much prayer and thought I consented. I have a group of 15-20 aged five and under. Needless to say my hands are full, but I really enjoy it. At the beginning I was somewhat overwhelmed but I have a lovely group of little ones. The group consists of Africans and expatriate children. We encouraged our entire Sunday School to invite their friends. Recently we had five new children. We are excited about this outreach.

I manage to keep up my typing skills by typing for Garry and some of the Independent Churches here in Francistown.

On Wednesday afternoon I go to a ladies Bible study. This is a group of mostly expatriates who come together for Bible study, sharing and prayer. We take turns leading the group. There is one lady in our group who is really searching spiritually. She has a lot of questions and challenges the rest of us.

Recently I had a unique opportunity with my Motswana neighbor lady. She mentioned that she and her husband are at the point where they need to "settle down" and make some decisions for God in their lives. I was very excited to be able to have this opportunity to share Christ with her. I leave the rest to the Holy Spirit.

Our children Jill and Mark take up a good part of the day. They are both very happy and active. They make sure that I get my exercise. Mark is content just to be outside to play. He loves going for stroller rides and gets excited when he sees the donkeys trotting down the tarred road.

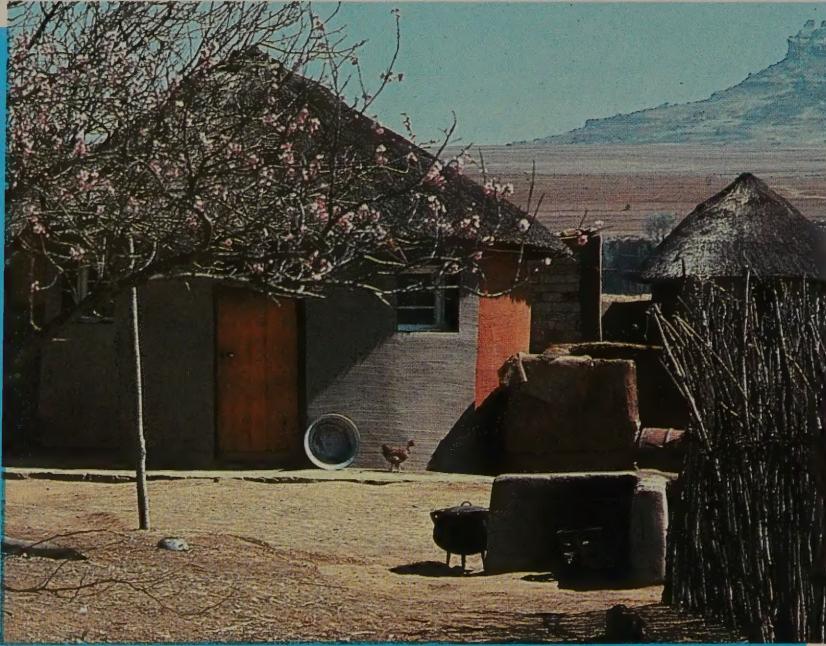
God certainly gives us the daily strength that we need to cope with our tasks. He is so faithful and has blessed us abundantly in so many areas. We do not always come away without frustrations and disappointments but it is exciting to know that we have an abundance of strength and love that comes from above. I thank and praise the Lord for giving me all these experiences. I have learned a lot from the people here. I have had to rely on God's strength more than ever but He is never failing. And that's exciting.



Mahalapye, Botswana

Diane Janzen and her husband Garry relate to African Independent Churches in Botswana. They serve with AIMM as Overseas Mission Volunteers from the General Conference.

Caring in Love



Village housing



memories in my collection

Christine Waltner

LESOCHO



Maseru United Church, Lesotho

Collecting memories is a part of all of our lives. And we go through life collecting memories, memories that really do become a part of ourselves. My Lesotho memories are going to include beautiful pink peach trees silhouetted against a very, very blue sky. They will include the soft blue and purple shadows on the mountains of Lesotho. And they will include a picture of a little village nestled against some of the buttes out in the country. And they're going to include baking lots of cookies and serving tea to many, many new friends. They will include the sound of doves that coo during the day, and the rooster that crows in the middle of the night, and a hundred dogs that bark at various intervals in the night.

But my memories of Lesotho will also include the Friday afternoon Scripture Union sessions when three of us met with 30-35 Basotho children who attend the English Prep school. After a time of games we gather together for singing and Bible study. Some days the bright, active young Basotho children sit and listen. And some days they can't possibly sit still for a minute longer. It's so good that God can use all of our efforts and that nothing we do for him is ever wasted.

My memories include the little dance that 'Me Mastona did when she finally finished this rather enormous nightgown she had been sewing by hand. She jigged around with it and she smiled at us. She had made it all by hand at one of Tina Bohn's sewing classes in Mafeteng. And I'll remember the nice blue dishes that 'Me Masela always used to serve us our lunch. Our lunch was always roasted chicken, rice, potatoes, cooked cabbage and peas. It was served beautifully by our African friend.

The parting song the ladies sing with a great deal of rhythm in their whole body, and the prayer that they said before Tina and I would pack up again and go back home to Maseru are in my memories.

Christine Waltner with her husband Harris returned to Lesotho in July for a second term. The Waltners, sponsored under AIMM by the General Conference COM, are serving the Maseru United Church.

I'll remember the Bible study group with their mix of nations which remind me that God does draw together people of all nations and all tongues, and how He uses each one of us to fellowship, study and prayer. I'll always remember Moji Idugu, my own little Nigerian god-child. I was so pleased when her mother chose me because it gave us a chance to share some of the Nigerian customs. Moji was born in Lesotho. I sometimes wonder and I pray for them because when they left Lesotho the mother and father were spending no time loving each other. And I'm wondering how Moji will do and whether their family in Nigeria will be able to pull back together again.

I remember the way that Matanda, from South Africa, shared the wonderful experience she had when she finally said 'yes' to Jesus and became a Christian. She had fought it for a long time. She was angry about many things. She had come out of South Africa and had bad memories about the church. But she did become a Christian. And she shared that story in a most beautiful way and she's also sharing it with other people.

And I'll always remember Judy from Uganda, who would come to Bible study saying, "You know what the Lord has done for me today?" Judy had a rough life, but Judy also had discovered the peace of knowing Christ in her life, and what God does for you when you trust Him for every little thing.

And I'll remember Doreen from England, who discovered she had breast cancer and had to have surgery. And the way she shared with us her faith that God would take care of her. She said, "The only reason I was calm was because so many people were praying for me." This was really an answer to prayer.

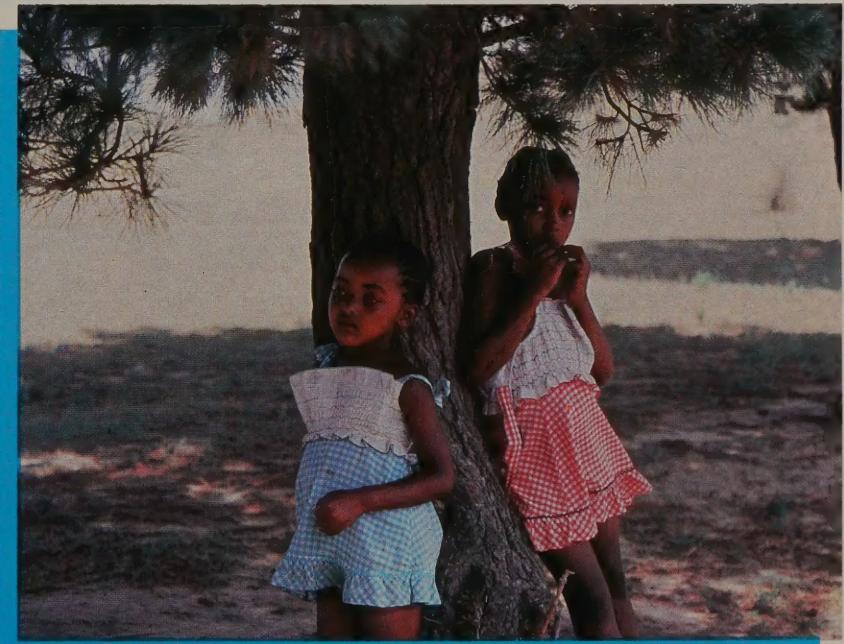
I'll remember flying out to visit an MCC couple who live way up in the mountains and the fun we had joining them for two nights when the five of us shared the one little square room they live in. They gave up their very comfortable bed for us and slept on the floor. But more than that, they shared their lives with us and their faith and the things that are important to them.



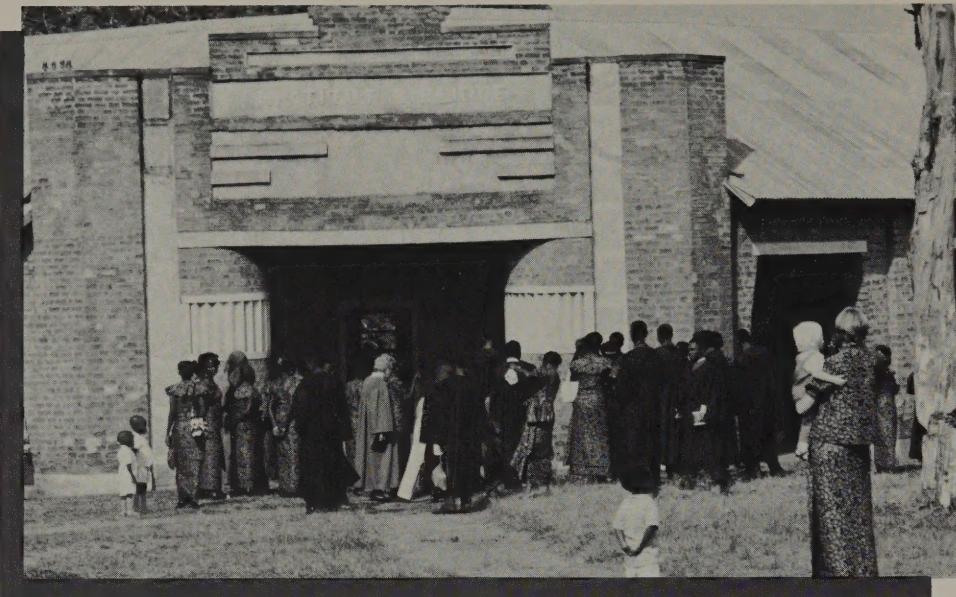
Aloes on Lesotho hillside

Memories will include many, many things and I have thousands of them. Memories will include the sadness of saying goodbye to some very, very good friends but also the excitement that comes when new people join us in our fellowship. Our memories involved the loneliness of being separated from family and friends, living thousands of miles away. But also the comfort of having very close friends who do become family for us. Memories will include holding hands with Phyllis, my neighbor, and praying for each other.

There are also other memories that I will have of Lesotho. Memories of discouraging experiences, frustrating experiences, the sad times and lonely times. But God uses each one of these memories in our lives to help us to grow in our faith and our trust in Him. He heightens the joy of happy memories, He bathes the painful memories with His love. When we come back I don't know what sort of memories I will have, but I'm sure they'll be important. And I'm sure that in each one of them God will be with me because Jesus himself said, "Lo, I am with you always."



children in Lesotho



Graduation morning at Kalonda Bible Institute

graduation glimpses

The festivities had started in the shade of a big mango tree on Thursday with a graduation banquet for the students. Parents, church officers, missionaries and school personnel were invited. It was an informal time of fellowship and rejoicing. The women's choir of the Bible Institute sang songs of happy praise.

Sunday everyone was busy long before daybreak. Many of the students had had so many relatives and friends from their home villages come in for the night that they could not possibly lodge them in their small apartments or give them a blanket or a bed. But this was not a great concern. They built fires behind their houses, sat around it on chairs, stools or mats and sang and talked all night. Around midnight they served big cups of weak tea with lots of sugar and milk. Some slept as best they could while others continued their vigil and celebration until daybreak. Now preparations for the great day continued.

Before the warm sun had lapped the heavy dew off the grass the officers from our church center arrived. The pastors in black garb, their wives elegant in their long traditional dresses, came too. By eight o'clock people were gathering in the church. Over a thousand attended.

An hour later a long procession slowly moved from the Bible Institute to the church. Officiating pastors in black robes, faculty in royal blue, the pastoral students in black and the women's class in long blue-gray gowns in traditional print and style. The faculty had the joy of watching their students approach up the long aisle with mincing steps and gently away onto the dias to take their place in the choir.

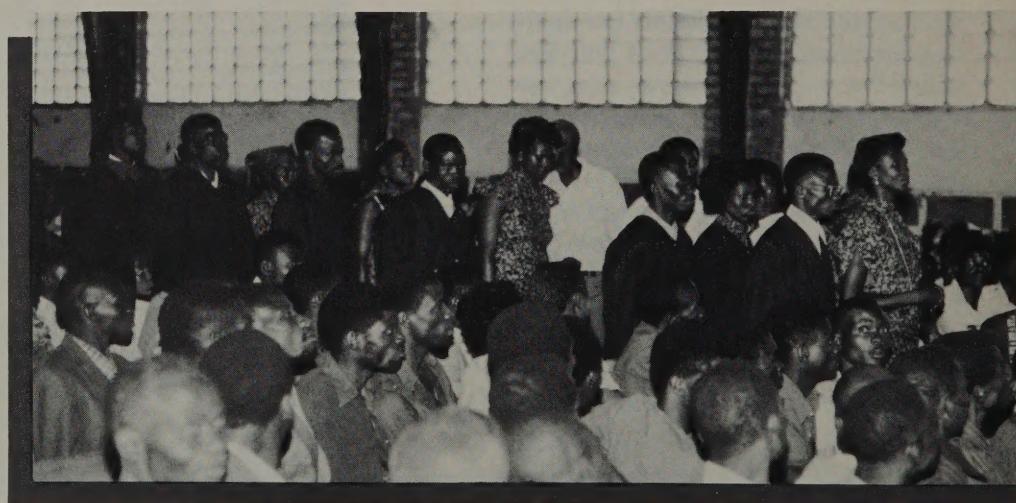
The class motto, chosen by the students hung in large blue letters over the podium: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

The church program was well organized, the inspiring speeches surprisingly short. Two valedictorians, a Mupende from Nyanga District and a Mushelele woman from Banga, spoke with verve and conviction. To save time only the school choirs sang. Many regretted this, especially those choral groups that had composed special songs for the occasion.

There was joyful animation as the church President called the names of the graduates and the Bible Institute Director handed them their diplomas. The two women in the pastoral section got special acclaim. Often a friend or relative swept the floor before a graduate in joyful exuberance as they walked off with the diploma.

After church graduates gathered with people from their church districts for a meal and special celebrations. In some cases the students had to provide most of the food; more often relatives and friends brought much of the manioc and meat on the hoof. Some groups had colorful traditional music and dancing. As I strolled the grounds that afternoon I thought, "How very different from our American or Canadian graduations. While those are uplifting and inspiring I believe many of our African friends truly celebrated and danced before the Lord today. I have a feeling that God himself is smiling in appreciation of their sincere joy."

Mary Epp



Processional in Kalonda Church



Recording proceedings



Graduation ceremonies

It is midnight. Lantern lights and fires are burning brightly. People are talking and laughing. Across the road a group of men are playing musical instruments, singing and dancing. Others are preparing food and drinking tea. It is Saturday night, the night before graduation for students at the Bible Institute, Kalonda. Graduation or "achievement" as it is called in French, is one of the most important events for the African. To "achieve" or earn a diploma at any level is a great occasion. It must be celebrated in style, and a good celebration must last at least twenty-four hours.

Graduation marks the end of a long, difficult road for the students. Four years ago, they left home to come to Kalonda to study. Mornings were

spent in class, afternoons at work and evenings in study. For four years most of them worked on Saturdays in their fields or the forests to earn money for food. Their Sundays were spent in various practical assignments. So when the graduation service began that Sunday morning we saw twenty proud and happy couples file into the church.

The service lasted three hours, short by African standards. The President of the church gave a surprisingly brief address and the speaker of the morning a very long sermon. There was applause and whistles as the students went forward to receive the diplomas. The couples, embracing each other in joy, looked attractive in robes and matching African print dresses.

After the service, the students had "fetes" (a celebration meal) at their homes. Large quantities of *bedia* (manioc prepared with corn meal), chicken, pork and goat meat were consumed by guests. Singing and dancing and picture taking continued all afternoon.

By evening things quieted down. The last bowls of *bedia* and bottles of pop were finished. People retired to their yards and houses. The day was over, the school year finished. But for the forty graduates this marked the beginning of their service to the church community. Each will be assigned to an area in their districts to provide pastoral leadership for their people. It is our prayer that they have received the training necessary to serve well in their work.

Tim Bertsche



Mary Epp, supported with AIMM by COM, has just finished her final year at the Bible Institute at Kalonda. She will be retiring to Saskatchewan.



Bible Institute graduates

Women's division graduates

Tim Bertsche is an instructor at the Kalonda Bible Institute. Tim and his wife Laura are sponsored by the Evangelical Mennonite Churches in the United States.

Praising in Joy

our first zionist service

Jean Isaac



Zionist service



Church robes in the Transkei

Except for the sunlight filtering through the curtains at the windows the room is dark. Three candles flicker in the semidarkness. We sit in a circle along the wall of the church building. Visitors and men are on seats. The women and children on the floor. Only the visitors are without special worship garb. All others have put on robes, capes and headpieces, mostly in white in this congregation.

A woman breaks out in song and two others at the drums beat out a very fast rhythm. We stand and join in. The Zionists are obviously experiencing their music. They keep time with hand and foot, their hands clapping vigorously, their feet stepping lightly. The room reverberates with sound and beat. I listen for the melody line of the son but find none. Short phrases seem to tumble into one another.

Suddenly the scene changes. The center of the room is cleared and the pastor glides to the wall where a bunch of handmade palm branches are leaning. He glides with them to the center and as people join him he distributes the branches among them. We learn later the palm branches and the worshippers' white robes signify those of the great multitude of Revelation 7:9. The circle of worshippers in the center sweeps one direction, then reverses and sweeps the other. A few return to their places and are replaced by others. The singing and clapping and drumbeating continues.

Thus began our first worship service with a Zionist church in the Transkei. Even now, after subsequent worship services we ponder their obvious enjoyment of worship. Enjoyment of worship? We are analyzing worship anew as we assemble with our Zionist friends. Our first months have shown that we have so much to learn.



Jean Isaac and her husband Gary are in the Transkei for their first term as Bible teachers with AIMM after serving for a dozen years in Kenya. The Isaacs are supported by the COM of the General Conference.



King Xerxes chooses his queen



Queen Esther is chosen

Esther saves her people

Gladys Buller

Can one woman make a difference in determining God's purpose for His people? Can women be influential in government? Answers to these questions came to mind more clearly as we produced a drama on Esther of the Bible.

Together with another teacher, Kikwiti, I was asked to produce a drama on the life of Esther. This was for the closing program of the Women's School at ISTK, the Institute of Higher Theological Education in Kinshasa.

Our first step was to reread the story of Esther. We asked all the participants to do the same. The process of writing the script fell to me since I knew how to type. But I had only an old translation of the Old Testament in Lingala, written many years ago. There is no modern day version available. After writing the script I asked Kikwiti to put it into modern dialect. About that time I found a cartoon book on Esther in a book store. I gave this to Kikwiti hoping it would help her visualize the scenes. This actually became her guide.

After the first practice I knew that my script might as well be thrown to the winds. Every scene was lengthened as songs and scriptures were interjected to provide meaning and emotion. When the beauty parade began before King Xerxes, little songs were sung by actors behind the scene. When Esther was chosen queen, they sang in Lingala, "God has chosen you" which is often sung to dignitaries as it had been for the Pope on his arrival in Zaire. When Esther commands that all her maidens pray and fast with her they added a

prayer song. When Haman is hung on the gallows and the Jews are finally saved, the women shouted, "Praise the Lord, Hallelujah!"

The scenes all flowed together in one long drama. It hung together beautifully and became more meaningful than I had ever envisioned it. Yes, Esther "was chosen for such a time as this." Esther knew the secret of power. It was fasting and prayer and then taking courage to obey the Lord by doing what He had planned for her and her people. And the women's school at ISTK made it come alive.

The secret of prayer and fasting



Gladys Buller and her husband, Peter, COM sponsored missionaries, have been on the staff of the Theological Institute (ISTK) in Kinshasa, Zaire. The Bullers completed their ministries at ISTK with the conclusion of the school year.



Richard & June Friesen completed French language study in Quebec and have arrived at Kalonda, Zaire. Rick will work in construction at the Bible Institute while June assists in medical work. The Friesens have three children, Christopher, 11; Carinna, 9; and Matthew, 6. June has a Diploma in Nursing from Kelsey Institute and Rick studied at Swift Current Bible Institute, University of Saskatchewan and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. Their parents are Dick & Helen Friesen, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and Ralph & Iva Ashton, Regina, Saskatchewan. The Friesens from the Wildwood Mennonite Church (GC), Saskatoon, are sponsored by the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Stephen & Janet Plenert have begun work in Zaire in support services in Kinshasa. Stephen attended Columbia Bible Institute, University of Victoria and has a Diploma of Christian Studies from Regent College. Janet attended Okanagan College and the University of Victoria with studies in Computer Science. Their parents are Rudolf & Kathy Plenert of Abbotsford, BC and Robert & Cecile Sinclair of Edmonton, Alberta. Steve is a member of the Olivet Mennonite Church (GC), Clearbrook, BC. Janet is a member of the Saanich Community M. B. Church, Victoria, BC. The Plenerts are sponsored by the General Conference Commission on Overseas Mission.



Gerald & Beverly Neufeld have been appointed to Burkina Faso as linguists/church planters, to go to the field in 1988. The Neufelds are members of Graysville Mennonite Church (GC), Graysville, Manitoba where Gerald served as pastor. At the same time Gerald was in a dairy farm partnership with his father. His parents are John & Lena Neufeld of Manitou. Gerald studied at Winkler Bible Institute and earned B.A. and M.A. degrees at Winnipeg Bible College and Seminary. Beverly, also a graduate of Winnipeg Bible College, is the daughter of John & Verna Dueck of Carman, Manitoba. The Neufelds have a daughter Juanita, born on Valentine's Day, 1985. Gerald and Bev will be sponsored with AIMM by the General Conference COM.

Dr. Glenn & Pauline Rediger have been assigned to the medical work in Zaire. The Redigers are members of the Highland Bethel Evangelical Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Glenn is the son of Miriam Escher and the late Lloyd Rediger. He graduated from Taylor University and the Indiana University School of Medicine. He did his internship and residency at the University of Hawaii. Pauline's parents, Paul & Leatrice Gima reside in her home community, Honolulu. Pauline is a graduate of Whitworth College, Spokane, Washington.

The Redigers are supported through the mission program of the Evangelical Mennonite Church in the United States.



AIMM has begun a partnership relationship in our ministries in Burkina Faso with the European Mennonite Mission Board (EMEK). The first couple to serve with AIMM through this partnership is **Paul & Martine Solomiac** from France. The Solomiacs relate to the Wycliffe's SIL program for technical supervision while working in the framework of AIMM's church planting strategy with Loren and Donna Entz. Their linguistic assignment is with the Samogho people at Saraba. Martine was raised in a French Mennonite church and is the daughter of Henri & Anna Lina Ehrismann. Paul's parents are Pierre and Josephine Solomiac. The Solomiacs are supported through EMEK by the French Mennonite Mission Committee (CMMF). Seventy-five years ago AIMM had several Europeans as part of the pioneering teams in the Congo. Once again AIMM's partnership is trans-Atlantic, this time having Anabaptist brothers and sisters share in pioneering among unreached peoples in Africa.

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AS OF LATE SUMMER 1987



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Kinshasa

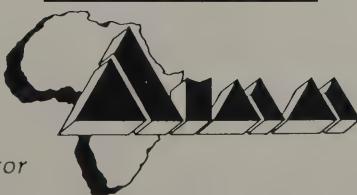
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Elmer & Jeannette Thiessen
Donovan, Phoebe Jean-Anne
B.P. 40
Orodara

Kotoura

Anne Garber
Russell & Gail Toevs
Kotoura
S/P Koloko

N'dorola

Dan & Kathy Petersen
Joy, Nathaniel
N'dorola
Province du Kénédougou
via Bobo Dioulasso

Orodara

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Charis, Lisa, Evan
Mathew & Becky Swora
Claire
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Orodara

Saraba

Loren & Donna Entz
Zachariah, Mariam, Aisha
Paul & Martine Solomiac
(in partnership with EMEK)
B.P. 40
Orodara

Tin

Paul & Lois Thiessen
Josiah, Ruth, Jonathan
B.P. 40
Orodara

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ON FURLough

from Lesotho
John & Tina Bohn

from Zaire
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Next Sunday the Lord will be worshipped in Africa. His name will be praised in many languages among many peoples. Because of the faithfulness to the Great Commission by a past generation God will be worshipped in Sesotho and Setswana, Xhosa, English and Afrikaans. In Zaire, Mennonite Christians will sing and pray in Tshiluba and Tshishilele, Gipende and Kituba, Chokwe and Lingala. In Burkina Faso the Word will be explained by AIMM missionaries in Djoula and French. And, with the help of God's people, before long there will be Sundays in which the Word will be available in Siamou and Senufo, Samogho and Toussian.

Next Sunday in Africa new believers will be baptized. Many will identify with the church for the first time.

By next Sunday new congregations will come into being. For many of these it is a flock without a shepherd, a following with little understanding and decision without discipleship. Next Sunday there will not be enough pastors to go around. Well-meaning lay leaders will seek to give direction but for many the lack of training will result in struggles and frustration.

Next Sunday most pastors will preach fervently but with few tools for preparation. For many reading is difficult. Education was minimal and demands of family and community overwhelming. But the Word will be preached in spite of the limitations.

Sunday Schools will meet with limited literature and few materials, while crowds of children are open and eager if there were something for them. Half the population is under fifteen years of age and so little is designed to reach or train them.

next sunday

Next Sunday Bibles will be missing because not enough have been printed. Paper prices soar while personal incomes diminish. Christian printers struggle to meet demands.

Next Sunday confusion will mislead some sincere persons. Misunderstanding of Old Testament practices or the meaning of Law compared to the gift of Life in Christ Jesus will puzzle many who have no one to turn to for guidance. And there are cults who will prey upon the gullible. But for most it's simply a lack of opportunity to be taught the Word in a language they can comprehend and a context they can understand.

Next Sunday is the first day of another week in which a radio studio with great potential will still wait for a programmer; where a mechanic will be dog-tired because no one is available to come to help; where some Bible classes will not be conducted because more Bible teachers have not responded to the call; and several ethnic groups will know nothing of the Scriptures because enough linguists are not yet available who will learn their language.

Next week some marriages may be fractured, homes will be hurting, and injustices will be ignored because more people who could care have not yet come.

Next Sunday a child along an African road will still wait for someone to share the Good News of Jesus with love that will make an eternal difference. Who will share? Who will go?

RWG



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other photos, Bob Gerhart.

The 16th century Anabaptist Hymn on page 16 was discovered and translated by Hans Kasdorf, professor at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California. He has given us permission to use his translation. We found that it fits beautifully to the tune: Lancashire, which many will recognize as the tune for "Lead On, O King Eternal."

When one reflects on what it meant for Anabaptist believers to venture out at the risk of life itself in obedience to the Great Commission, the words of this hymn, used at Commissioning Services, should motivate us to greater dedication to God's will and purpose.

AIMM has approximately eighty missionaries serving in five areas of Africa.



For 75 years Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission has been involved in planting, watering and harvesting. Some labored under difficult and lonely circumstances. Others remained faithful through dangerous and uncertain situations. Many made great sacrifices. For some it cost their very lives.

Not all progress was rapid, not all activity was helpful. Not all methods proved fruitful but God used His people and His Church. He caused the growth and He alone deserves the Glory.

God has used a unique arrangement as a means for this fruit bearing on the African continent. From the beginning AIMM was a partnership for mission ministry. Starting with two groups, the Evangelical Mennonite Church (EMC-USA) and the Central Conference of Mennonites based in Illinois, an organization was incorporated in 1912 to plant the seed of the Gospel in inland areas of the Congo. From the beginning the missionary team included workers from other groups as well.

Evangelical Mennonite Brethren (EMB) affiliated in 1938 and when the Central Conference merged with a district of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GCMC) the latter body became a partner in 1943. Canadian partnership developed as missionaries from the Evangelical Mennonite Conference (EMC-Can.) joined the team. This conference became a full partner in 1984. Another Canadian group, the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (EMMC) joined the partnership in 1986. The Mennonite Brethren (MB) have had a parallel ministry in Zaire for many years. In 1975 they joined in AIMM's new thrust into Southern Africa among African Spiritual Churches and continue as Associate Members of the AIMM partnership. Recently the French Mennonite churches through the European Mennonite Mission Committee (EMEK) have associated with AIMM's ministries in Burkina Faso.

In addition persons from the Mennonite Church, the Missionary Church Association, the Mennonite Brethren In Christ, and from several European countries have been among the more than 350 missionaries that served with AIMM through the years.

Together in ministry since 1912

Some planted the seed, others watered it, but God was causing the growth.

So then neither those who planted nor those who watered are anything ultimately but only God who causes the growth.

Those who plant and those who water have the same purpose and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.

It's true some get to sow and others will reap.

Some of you are sent to reap that for which you did not do the labor of planting. Others have done the hard work and you reaped the benefits of their labor.

But both those who plant and those who reap may rejoice together in the harvest of the fruits for eternal life.

AIMM seeks to be a fruitful tree.

Planted by God's grace 75 years ago,
its roots reach into the soil of
an evangelical and Anabaptist
understanding of Scripture.

Obedience to the Great Commission
led to a love for the peoples of Africa.

The earlier dates on the roots
indicate when the first missionaries from the respective groups were sent to the Congo.
The later date indicates when that group became an official partner in AIMM's organization.
Beginning in the 1970's AIMM branched out to other fields as illustrated.

A Tree of God's Planting



Pouring the slab



IB is the abbreviation of Institut Biblique, commonly used by missionaries for the Bible Institute at Kalonda, across the Kasai River from Tshikapa, Zaire.

I.B. expansion

Steve Nelson

Steve Nelson went to Zaire in 1984 with his wife, Pat, and their two children. His assignment is to supervise the construction at Kalonda. Steve and Pat are members of the Pine Hills Evangelical Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana. They serve under AIMM supported by the EMC congregations in the United States.



Steve Nelson meeting with his work crew

The Bible Institute at Kalonda has the same purpose as Bible colleges here: to train Christian young men and women, equipping them for evangelism and ministry.

One difference at Kalonda is that we train young men *and their wives*. Marriage is required before acceptance at the school, so that pastors and their wives are both trained and can work together as a team in ministry.

Kalonda is the only Mennonite Bible Institute training men and their wives to work in our churches scattered through the bush regions of Zaire. There is a theological institute in the capital city offering a higher degree. We have a few Mennonite students at this school each year. It plays a very important role in the church, too. But the Kalonda Bible Institute is our main source for training couples to minister and evangelize among the small villages and tribes throughout our region of Zaire.



Bricks made by the ram press



Setting the rafters

The Bible Institute has a four-year training program and facilities for 20 to 22 student families. That means only one graduating class of 22 students is produced every four years.

AIMM's goal is to double the capacity of the Bible Institute so that it can run two classes simultaneously. Then it can graduate a class of 22 every two years instead of every four. That means we must build student housing for at least 20 more families and two or three more professors.

Zaire has hundreds of village congregations but only a small percentage of those have a pastor. Most congregations are being led by a deacon or an elder and visited only once every few months by an ordained pastor who will administer communion, baptize and perform marriages.

But evangelism is happening! The Gospel is being shared. Churches are being planted by lay leaders, through family members, travelling evangelists and evangelism seminars. But we are not meeting the demand for enough trained pastors.

But when we started the first project we discovered existing housing was in a terrible state of disrepair. Four of the houses had to be torn down and rebuilt from the ground up. All the others had to have roofs and walls repaired and doors and windows replaced or rebuilt. The brick floors of the existing houses were unrepairable so we poured a one and a half inch cement floor over top of each one.

To begin a project of this size we had to prepare a working space. Here we could begin making cement blocks and pressed bricks. A carpenter shop and tool storage was needed. We had to make provision for drying the lumber as it comes in from the forest.

It was barely a start but by the time we got all that done and were ready to repair the classroom building itself, which is in great need, funds for Bible Institute construction ran out. The new housing hasn't even been started yet.

When the housing is ready for the additional class it will still need a place to meet. To operate both classes requires four classrooms, two for men's classes and two for the women's classes.

The existing building is only three classrooms and a small library which until now has doubled as the chapel. The library room is adequate to make into a fourth classroom, but a new library/chapel facility needs to be built which can accommodate the 88 students.

All this takes time and money. The Lord has affirmed this project all through these first phases. We now have another builder, Rick Friesen, in Zaire studying the language. He is getting ready to start construction again when funds are available.

Pat and I will be going back to Zaire, as well, after furlough and French study to continue this project. We now wait patiently for God to move the hearts of His people to give so that this evangelistic effort can continue.



Don Boschman is in his first term with AIMM. Supported by the General Conference COM, Don works with both an English language church at Jwaneng and African spiritual churches of the area through Mennonite Ministries in Botswana.

Language Learning



Village of Bokaa, Botswana



Milking the goat



Don Boschman learning Setswana

I had never been very good at learning foreign languages. During my high school and university years I took classes in four different languages but after the classes came to an end I promptly forgot most of what I had learned. As a result when I arrived in Botswana I didn't have a lot of confidence in my language learning abilities.

Fortunately it had been arranged for me to bypass the local language school in Botswana and instead go directly to the small village of Bokaa to learn Setswana. Bokaa is a village of about 2500 people, 35 kilometers northeast of Gaborone, the capital city.

In Bokaa I began each day learning a new phrase or sentence structure that I had written down and taped the day before. After learning it reasonably well I went for a long walk in the village and used my "phrase of the day" with as many people as possible. The next day I learned a new phrase which built on the previous day's work.

What most surprised me was how supportive the majority of the people in the village were to my learning of Setswana. Most would put down whatever they were doing and listen and correct me as I stumbled through my phrase of that day.

Even small, preschool aged children would get in on the act, pointing to things and calling out the name. For example, every day for almost a month, one small boy pointed to his head and yelled, "Tlhogo, tlhogo!" (Head, head!) I learned the word after a couple days but he continued to shout it out every time I came near. I took to avoiding his house.



Botswana

at Bokaa

by Don Boschman

It was not all smooth sailing however. One difficulty was that after a certain point it was difficult to incorporate my new phrases into normal conversation. For example, I had no problem using, "Do you have cold Coke?" at least once a day. But I did have a problem with the Blessing of Numbers 6. How do you slip, "Now may the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you" into a conversation about the weather? I finally hired someone for an hour a day to practice some of these less used constructions and phrases.

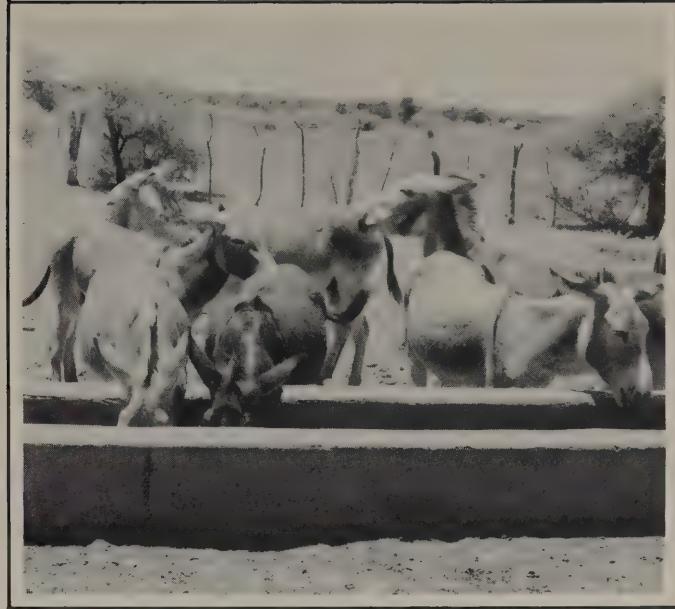
A less easily solved problem involved my own ego; it took a terrible beating during my 16 months of language learning. People outside the village were surprised at how "quickly" I was learning Setswana. But those of the village with whom I talked every day were often frustrated at my painfully slow progress.

One old man suggested that I go see the traditional doctor to find out if he had any "medicine" that would help me learn Setswana more quickly.

I checked. No luck.

With another friend I struggled through the Setswana version of the Grade 1 Reader. Then one day she asked me if I had finished primary school in Canada. I knew what she was getting at.

In retrospect, however, I am glad that I had the opportunity to learn Setswana in a village situation. Perhaps I would have learned Setswana more quickly in a school situation, but had I done so I would have had a lot less fun. And I would not have made a fraction of the number of friends I did make during my months in Bokaa. Language learning turned out to be more pleasant than I thought it would be.



Donkeys at water trough



Community choir members



Practicing Setswana in cafe

Bakary's name is pronounced: Bah'-kah-ree

Life is quiet in the village of Tin. The rhythmic sound of women pounding millet is interrupted as a passerby calls her greetings. Coulibally Bakary lives in this village.

Bakary was one of a few who had opportunity to attend the village school. In school he learned to speak the French language. During his childhood his country was called Upper Volta. A few years ago it was changed to Burkina Faso.

As he grew older the time came for him to marry the girl his parents had chosen for him. A few years later he chose a second wife. As a married man he had a higher status in the village and with it came new responsibilities.

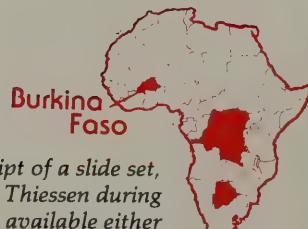
The rainy season is the busiest time of the year. When April rains soften the hard soil, Bakary and his brothers cultivate the land in preparation for seeding millet, sorghum, corn, okra and peanuts.

Not only does Bakary work in the fields that belong to his family but he also belongs to an agricultural association of 40 young men who work together each Wednesday to cultivate fields for others. In this way they raise money to support community projects.

Every man has strong muscles from cultivating with a shovel-like hand hoe. Balliphone music creates a festive atmosphere during these cultivating parties. Musicians follow the men back and forth across the field throughout the day providing both entertainment and a lively rhythm for the workers to follow.

Dry season is more relaxed with time for visiting but there is still work to be done. Mud bricks must be made to build huts. After walls of the hut are up the roof can be built.

Bundles of tied grass are unrolled onto a bamboo frame. When the frame is covered and the rain-proof tip in place, the roof is ready to be set on the hut. All available family members, bystanders or even passersby are recruited to lend a hand.



This article is adapted from the script of a slide set, *Bakary's Story*, developed by Paul Thiessen during his recent furlough. The slide set is available either from the EMC office in Steinbach or AIMM's Elkhart office.

Paul Thiessen with his wife, Lois, and their three children recently returned to the village of Tin in Burkina Faso for a second term of service with AIMM. They work as linguists with the objective of evangelism and eventual church planting. The Thiessens from Blumenort, Manitoba, are supported by the Evangelical Mennonite Conference in Canada.



Work crew finishing Thiessen's house at Tin

One day four years ago, close to the end of rainy season, two white men riding on mopeds stopped along the road across from Bakary's courtyard. The African men could not speak French and did not understand what these people wanted.

They looked for Bakary, one of the few in Tin who speaks French. The visitors chatted with Bakary leisurely saying they lived in Orodara and expressed an interest in seeing the village.

One of the white men mentioned his desire to live in this village. A few weeks later he came again. This time he asked to see the village chief for permission to move into the village of Tin.

The white man said he desired to live in Tin in order to learn the Saimou language. He wanted to develop a writing system for Siamou in order to translate the Bible into their language. He said that the Bible is God's Word and he wanted them to be able to read it. He wished to share with the Siamou people God's message from the Bible.

BAKARY: A BEGINNING

by Paul Thiessen

Balliphone music provides rhythm for field work



The village elders discussed the matter and concluded that the white man with his wife and children were welcome to move into their village. The man's name was Paul Thiessen. His wife was Lois, and their two children, Josiah and Ruthie.

Bakary felt honored that this man was interested in learning his language and eagerly helped him learn more.

The family was ready to move to Tin but there was no empty house to move into. Bakary asked his cousin Ali if the empty room in their courtyard might be available. Ali asked his uncle who gave the necessary permission and the new family soon moved into Ali's courtyard.

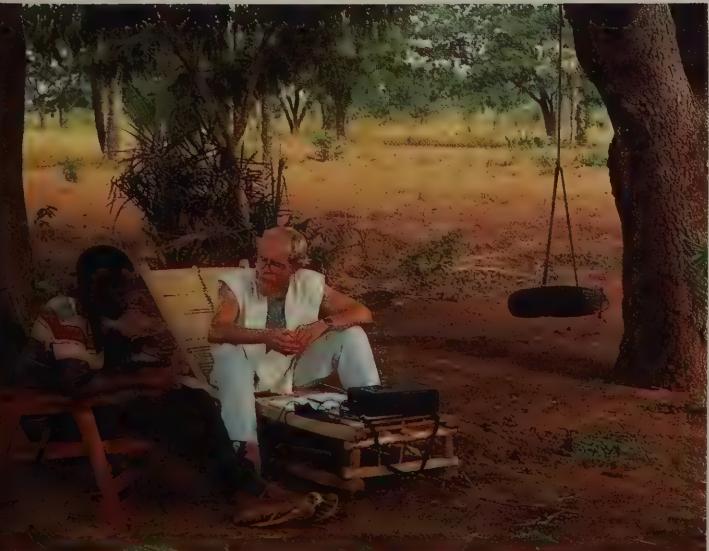
During the next three weeks they slept in a grass-roofed hut and joined the African family at their meals. Ali's family was gracious and hospitable.

Bakary's uncle, the land chief, was willing to allow this new family to build a house on his field. Bakary soon got to know Dennis Rempel, a missionary from Orodara, who supervised the building of the foundation and floor of the white family's new house. Local masons from the village built the walls and put in the doors and windows. The building project had been slow in getting started.

But the roof of the house was put on very quickly in just one week! Eight strange men from Ohio in North America arrived in Tin with a generator and power tools. Their leader's name was Orville Fricke. With incredible speed and remarkable efficiency, the team of builders made the wooden rafters, nailed on the tin roofing sheets, and closed in a screened porch. Bakary's children, nephews, brothers and neighbors came to watch as noisy tools and hard-working men did their job.

Bakary was introduced to Allan and Elma Koop from Canada who stayed after the other builders left to continue the finishing of the house. He was impressed as they completed the windows and painted the interior of the house. The new family could move into Tin to stay.

Paul Thiessen working on Siamou language



Bakary, as all the people in Tin, is Muslim. The village had once practiced animism, but had left those spirit-worshiping rituals when they accepted the religion of Mohammed.

In Orodara many of the Siamou people still follow the traditional animistic religion. One week excitement mounted in Orodara as word spread that an extraordinary Siamou religious celebration would soon take place. This event happens only once every 30 years.

Along with thousands of others, Bakary rode his bicycle the one-hour ride to Orodara. With great fascination he watched as hundreds of masked men entered the village of Orodara. They had spent a month in the bush receiving instruction from the elders. These were secret initiation rites of the Siamou people.

At the very same moment, while Bakary was watching the unusual activities of that Sunday celebration, another meeting was taking place in Orodara not far away. A group of African Christians, together with a handful of missionaries, were singing songs in the Djoula language, songs of praise and worship to God. One of them was a Siamou young man who had been baptized a year earlier. The others were from the Mossi, Senoufo and Tous-sian ethnic groups. This group of believers had been meeting regularly for a number of years.

Bakary had entered the Protestant church on one occasion, the wedding of his friend Siaka, the first Christian wedding at this church.

Bakary has met many of the AIMM missionaries who have lived in Orodara and has a small idea of the purpose of the mission, the purpose of bringing God's Word to people who have not heard it.

Bakary too is interested in God's Word, the Bible. He has read with interest the French copy of the Gospel of Matthew which Paul Thiessen had given him. And he is pleased that the Scriptures would one day be written in his language, the Siamou language.



Raising the roof in village of Tin



Sha' Pulu's testimony

Sha' Pulu has been one of the patriarchs of the Nyanga church. He has seen many changes through the years. When Grace Harder interviewed him some time ago she asked about his first commitments to Christ. That interview is the basis of this article.

MAZEMBA'S NEW LIFE

by Grace Harder

"If you go to the missionary, he will eat you!" village elders warned. "You will be lost, lost to your family, lost forever."

What was Mazemba to do? He was only 13 years old when strangers called "evangelists" appeared at his Pende village in the Belgian Congo. These men were not Pende. They were part of the Lulua tribe from areas to the east. But they had come to Mazemba's village in south central Zaire with a message they said was "Good News."

Mazemba was interested in this news but many people warned him of the fearful consequences of following this new way.

Several African evangelists visited Mazemba's village that year of 1919. There was Muambaishayi and Musuasua, Kimanga and Katalazi. But the favorite of this curious young lad was Kamba James.

Kamba James told of a special Book from God. He said he had come to help Mazemba and his friends learn the Word of God. He talked about teaching the boys letters so they could learn to read, too.

The evangelists closed their eyes when they talked to God. But Mazemba was not about to close his eyes. He was afraid if he did he might die. He wanted to run, to get away from this puzzling talk.



Kamba James was not frightening. He was a teacher-evangelist that genuinely loved the boys and cared about them. He didn't mind their questions and the boys had many. Especially about this wonderful Person named Jesus.

The teacher spoke of the "riches of God." Could it be that this God had as many riches as the Fominiere Company trading store the boys had visited on rare occasions? There were so many wonderfully strange things on those shelves. Could God give anyone more than that?

One Sunday the teacher-evangelist told the story of Nicodemus in John 3. After the service Mazemba went to talk to the teacher. Mazemba asked, "what is the wrath of God that would remain on me if I did not accept the Son of God?"

Kamba James, beginning with the story of Christ's birth, explained how Jesus had taught the people but the people had refused Him and killed Him on the cross. "But," he told the boy, "Jesus arose the third day. When Christ had risen from the dead God took Him to heaven. God then put His Word on the earth saying 'Accept Jesus and have everlasting life.' "

Mazemba went home that evening and thought over those words.

Grace Harder and her husband, Arnold, learned to know Sha' Pulu during their years in Nyanga, Zaire, where Arnold is director of the church-related SEDA agricultural program. Grace made time in her busy schedule to interview this elderly pioneer Christian. The Harders are from Mountain Lake, Minnesota, and are sponsored with AIMM by the General Conference COM.

*First fruits of Bapende evangelism; Aaron Janzen baptizing three boys
(from left) Kipoko David, Kitamba Kiputa, Mazemba Pierre, in 1921.*

Later he returned with his friend, Kipoko, and told the teacher he wanted everlasting life. Kamba James questioned him, "Why do you want everlasting life? What do you have to give to Jesus?

"If I have money and you have meat that I want, what must I give to get the meat?" he asked Mazemba.

"You give the money to get the meat," the teacher explained. "You must give Jesus your heart to have everlasting life. Jesus does not want any pay, but He wants your heart."

Mazemba understood. He could not buy eternal life but the least he could do was to give Jesus his heart and his love, his whole life. Jesus was worth more than all the fascinating goods of the trading store could ever be. When the teacher asked him, "Who do you want to believe in?" Mazemba answered, "Jesus."

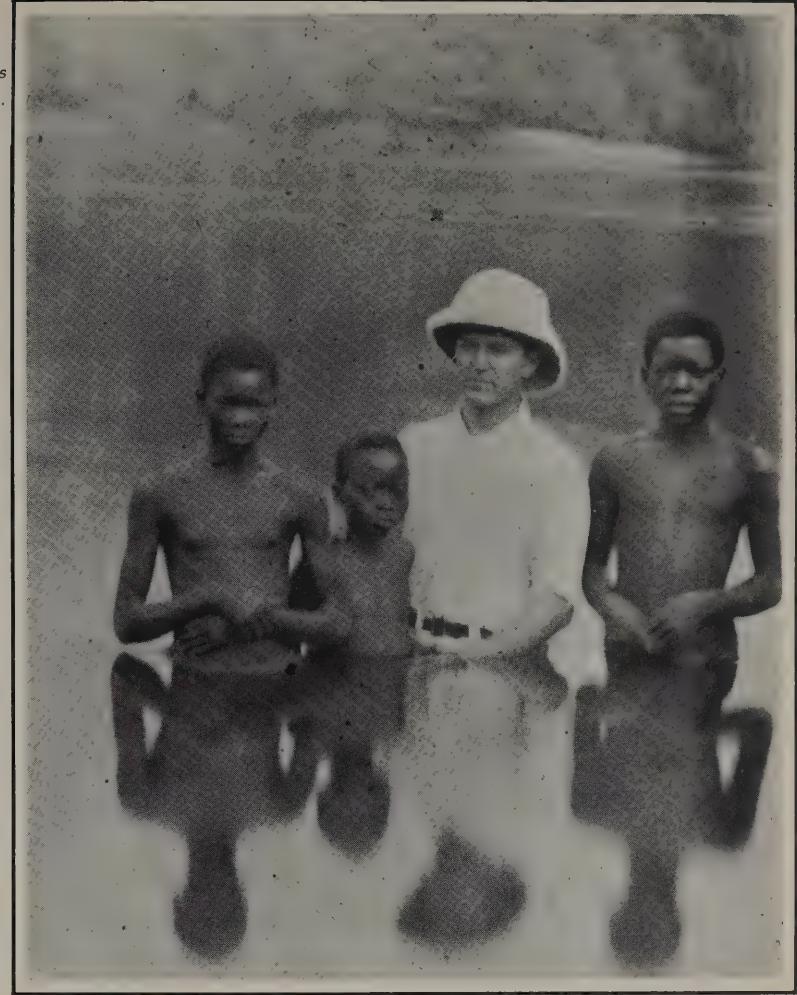
Mazemba prayed, but this time without being afraid to close his eyes. Then the teacher prayed. His friend Kipoko also decided to become a Christian at the same time. Afterwards the teacher dismissed them but not before encouraging them to refuse to take part in some of the Pende customs, certain kinds of dancing and the putting of red makeup from camwood on their bodies.

Mazemba's friendship grew as he followed the teacher's instructions. Kamba took him along on several trips. Mazemba was amazed at the things he saw, especially when they worshiped with other Christians at the big settlement, Luebo. There he met the senior missionary.

The missionary asked Mazemba if he was afraid.

"Not any more," the boy replied. "I was at first. I was told by some other people and even people who work for the State that I should not follow the ways of the missionary. Some said I would never see my family or home anymore if I did. I used to be afraid of many things like witchcraft and lightning and other things that everyone in our village feared. But with God as my help I can overcome these fears."

After these experiences Mazemba decided he wanted to enter into the work of the Lord, too. His parents were no longer living. His uncles were responsible for him but, since they too were impressed with the love and caring of Kamba James, they were happy to see him follow the teachings of the teacher-evangelist. His uncles put the customary chalky "pemba" white clay on Mazemba's arms, thereby indicating their permission for him to enter the Lord's work.



Mazemba's brothers and sisters had no objections to his becoming a Christian. They reasoned, "If Mazemba is a Christian and goes to school to learn to read and write, he can get a good job and will be able to buy things for the family."

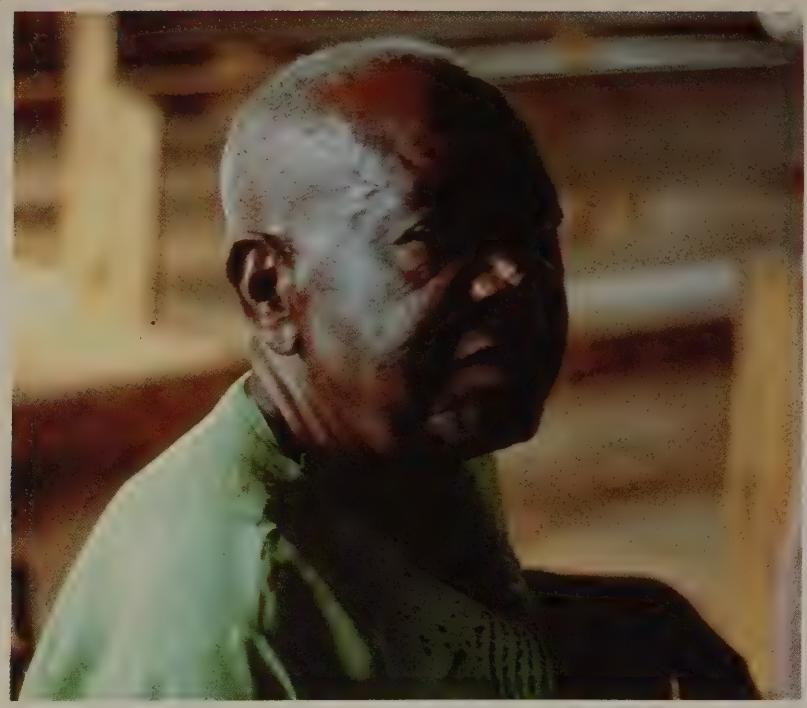
One night Mazemba went to his teacher to ask about this. Could he work at a job and also follow Christ? This was a big question in his mind. Could a follower of Christ still be interested in material things? Was it alright to earn money to buy things when the "riches" of Christ are so much greater?

Mazemba, along with his friend Kipoko and another young man, Kitamba Kiputa, were baptized in 1921. Mazemba was 15 years old. They were the first baptized believers from the Bapende tribal group.

Sixty-five years later Mazemba, now known as Sha' Pulu, which means "the father of Pulu," recalled, "We were baptized by Madikanyi (Rev. Aaron Janzen) in 1921 in the Kasai River near Djoka Punda which was later called Charlesville. We studied the catechism book which emphasized how to live a Christian life. I also wanted to learn how to tell others about life everlasting."

Sha' Pulu described that first baptism service, "We were taken into the home of a missionary where we were asked about our experiences and accepting Christ into our lives. It was early on Sunday morning.

continued on next page



Sha' Pulu "Many people gathered at the Kasai River for the service. Kamba James told about coming to work with the Bampende and how we three boys were the first fruits of that labor.

"Next, a message was given by a missionary on the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. He told how the people repented and accepted Christ. A deacon from Djoka Punda led in prayer and then the missionaries performed the baptism. While we were still in the water they sang a hymn.

"After that we knelt on the riverbank and the missionary, with uplifted hands, stood in front of us and prayed. Then he took each in turn by hand and asked us to rise and he accepted us into the church.

"Kamba James gave the message at the church service which followed. In the afternoon we attended communion."

As was the custom, on the day of baptism the new Christians would adopt a new name, a Bible name.

Sha' Pulu had pondered this a long time and chose the name "Peter." Thus he became Mazemba Petelo or Mazemba Pierre. His friend Kipoko chose the name David.

Mazemba Pierre was extremely happy. He had experienced so many new things. But most wonderful was knowing he was a child of God.

After more than six decades in the Lord's work Sha' Pulu was still rejoicing, "There is great happiness as one anticipates everlasting life. I had joy in the strength which God gave to do the work of the Lord and also to work with my hands. I had joy in working along with missionaries thereby gaining strength from them. Most of all I had joy in being a person of God. There will be much happiness in heaven."



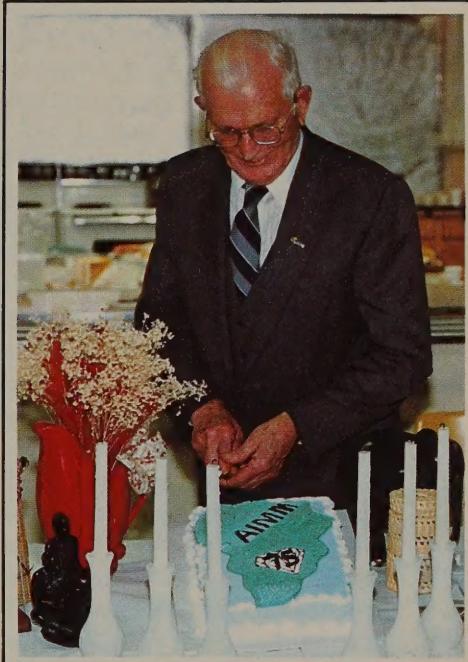
To commemorate AIMM's Anniversary year several Rallies were held. The first was held at Steinbach, Manitoba, at the conclusion of the AIMM Board meetings in October 1986. A series of three Rallies were held in November in the three states where AIMM's original 1912 constituency was located: Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. Similar Rallies in 1987 have been held in Mountain Lake, Minnesota, Fort Wayne, Indiana and Harleysville, Pennsylvania.

Each of these programs introduced Earl Roth as AIMM's new Executive Secretary, featured AIMM's multimedia presentation: "There is a River," and introduced present and former missionaries and Board members. Combined choirs from area churches added a challenge through music and the Anabaptist missionary hymn, found on the back of this Messenger, was the moving conclusion of the service.

During the refreshment time a variety of "birthday cakes" designed by persons in these communities added a festive touch to mark AIMM's 75th Anniversary.

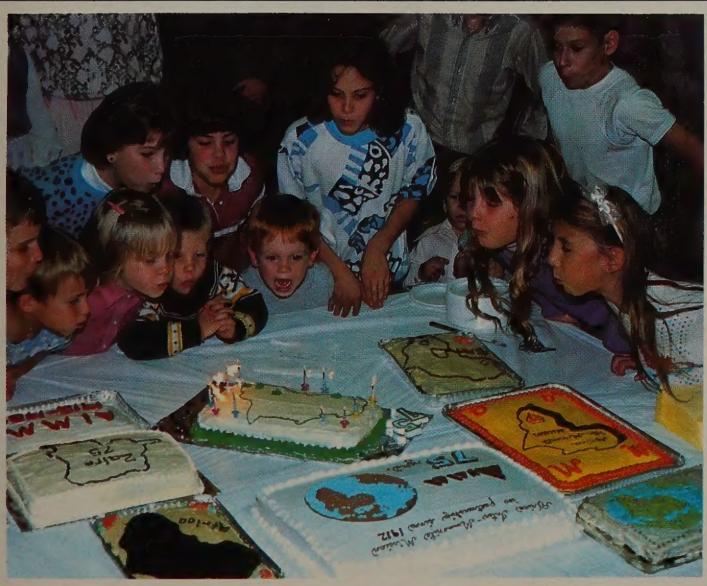
Fellowship time at AIMM Anniversary Rally, Berne, Indiana





AIMM'S BIRTHDAY RALLIES

mark 75th Anniversary



Clockwise from upper left: Blowing out the candles, Archbold, OH; Array of cakes, Berne, IN; Archie Graber cutting cake, Archbold; Anticipating the taste, Gridley, IL; The candles wouldn't go out, Berne; Heidi Rempel & Sara Regier, admiring cake, Steinbach, MB; Two of the ten cakes, Mt. Lake, MN.

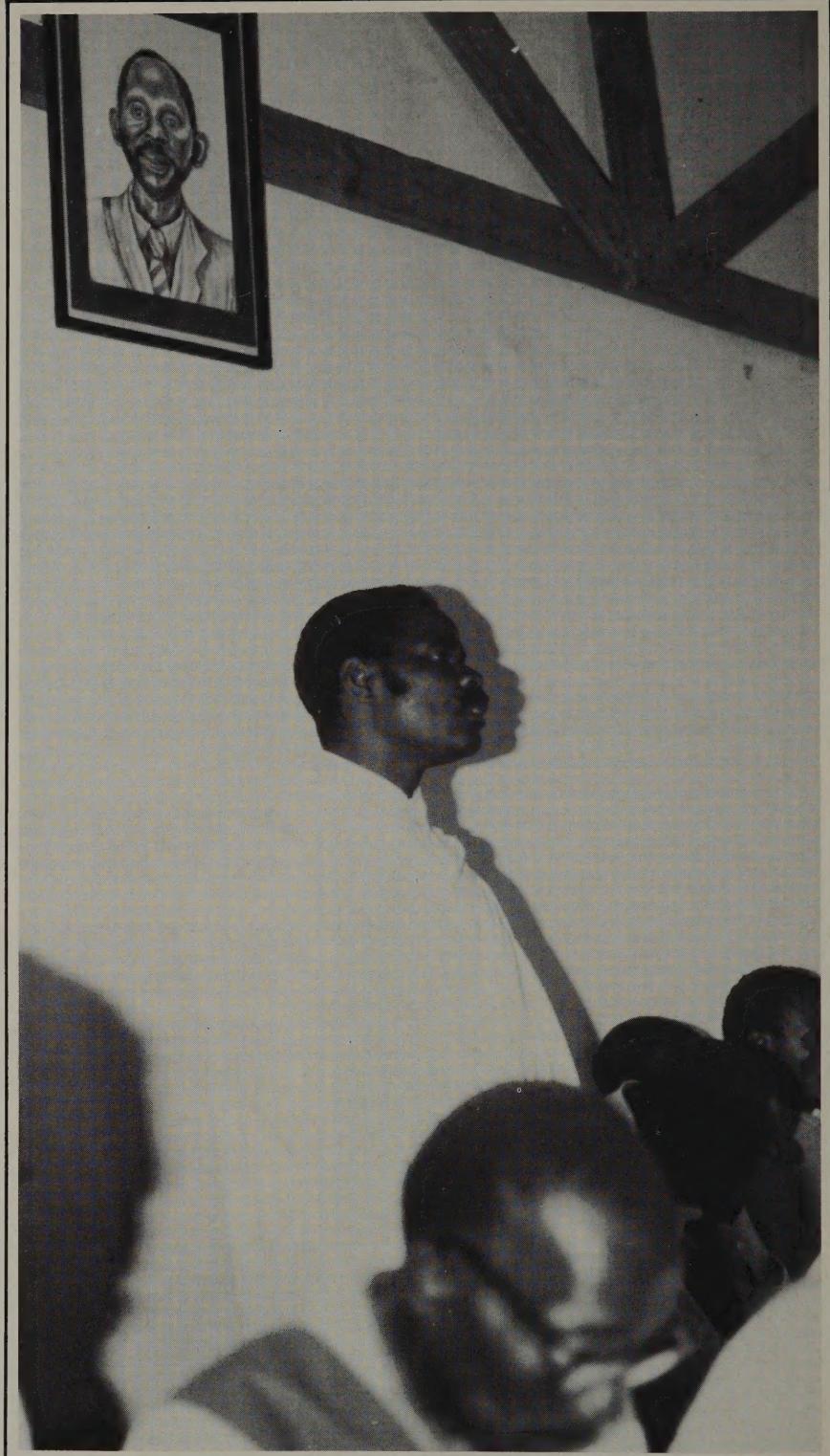
If you've ever struck out across uncharted country, you know the feeling of anxiety about finding your way. In many ways this conveys the situation of Mennonites working with Independent Churches in southern Africa. Very few have passed this way before.

But every now and then you come upon a cairn assuring you, that whatever may lie ahead, you have not entirely lost your way; this is still the intended route. Such moments are exhilarating.

I had this sensation as I sat one night with an old friend from the Eleven Apostles Healing Spirit Church, Otsile Ditsheko. In earnest conversation he recalled for me a story I had heard years ago but had forgotten. It was about the founder of his church, the Prophet Moswela. In the last year of his life on the occasion of the church-wide gathering at Easter in the village of Maun, the prophet delivered a prophecy to the assembly. He told them he had had a vision of brothers, white brothers, coming to his people. These friends from far away would join with the Eleven Apostles Healing Spirit Church in a partnership of faith and witness. They were to be received with honor and hospitality, he told them. That was fifteen years ago. The prophet died in September of that year, 1972.

Barely three years later AIMM Bible teachers Ed and Irene Weaver and Buddy and Lois Dyck appeared on the scene, soon to be followed by others. And from the earliest days there was an immediate bond with the people of the Eleven Apostles Healing Spirit Church, the kind of bond that has taken years to develop with other churches.

For me this was another trail sign confirming the route we have taken. It helps us see that we have company on the trail, company that has preceded us, is presently with us, and, no doubt, follows in our wake.



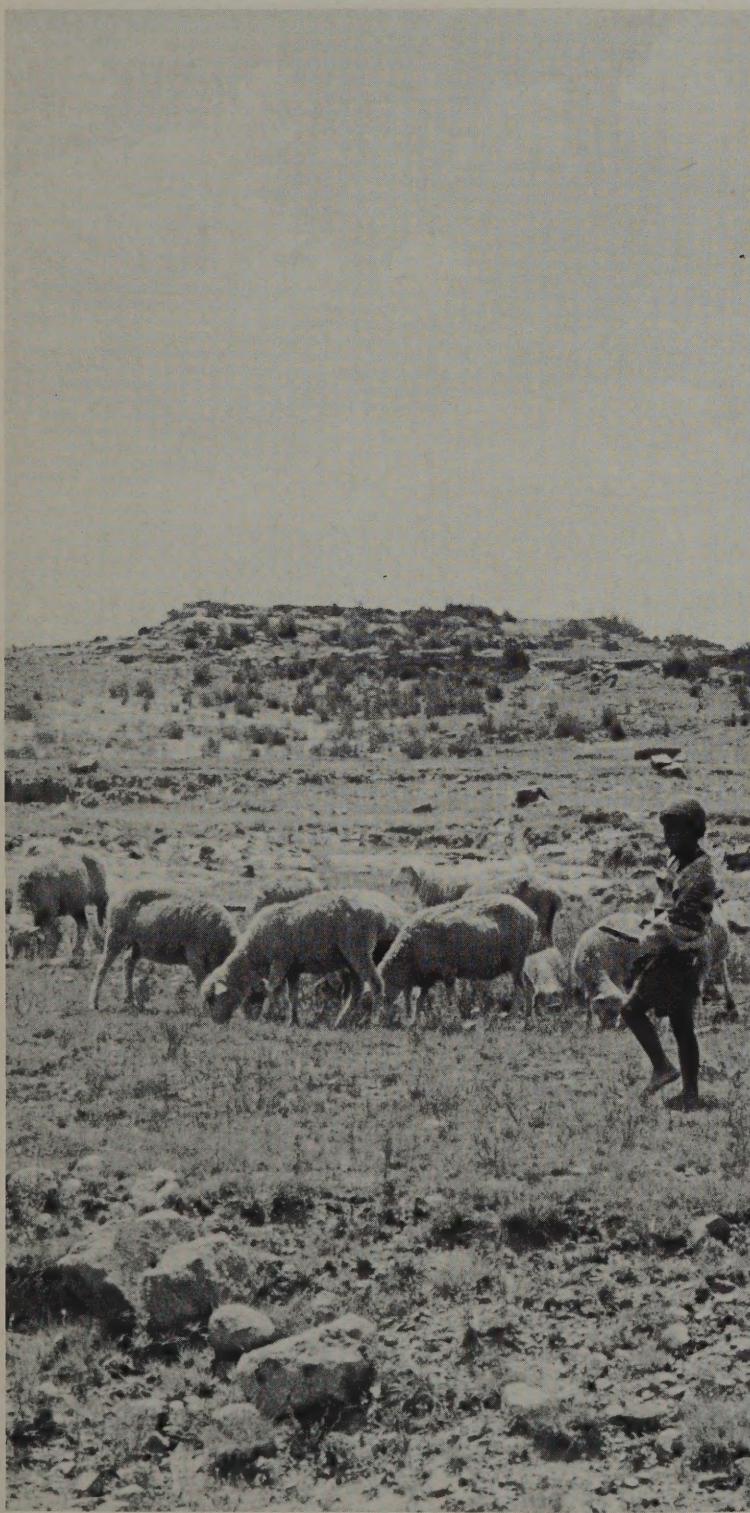
Otsile Ditsheko responding at his ordination in the Eleven Apostles Church, Maun, Botswana; above him is a sketch of the church's founder, the Prophet Moswela

by Jonathan Larson

Jonathan Larson and his wife, Mary Kay, make their home in Gaborone where Jonathan relates to the African spiritual churches of Botswana. As AIMM missionaries working through Mennonite Ministries the Larsons are supported by the General Conference COM.

THE PROPHET'S VISION

the FOURTH QUARTER



Lesotho herdboy and his flock

Our Diamond Jubilee Year is ending. Seventy-five years of AIMM mission activity are now complete. Three-quarters of a century. To God be the glory!

But it's not over. The end of a third quarter is not the end, whether in a game of football or a fiscal year. If God grants us, as a mission, a full century to serve Him we are just beginning our Fourth Quarter.

If our Lord delays His return what will AIMM be in 2012 A.D.? That is only 25 years from now. Twenty-five years is a very short time in the history of God's grace.

Most of the candidates for mission service in 2012 have already been born. Many of AIMM's present team could easily serve well beyond 2012. And a majority of those who attended a 75th Anniversary Rally will be around for AIMM's Centennial.

The world of 2012 will be quite different, but the Lord's mandate to evangelize and disciple among all peoples will be the same. The Mennonite scene in North America will undoubtedly have changed. But I believe AIMM's unique witness as a partnership in mission of several conferences will still be needed.

No one knows when our Lord will return but He left us a pattern in the parable when the nobleman told his servants, "Occupy till I come." (Luke 19:13)

In the image of a fiscal calendar: "Keep on doing business with what I have entrusted you, until I return. Don't close the books yet. It's only the end of the third quarter."

In the words of a coach: "Keep going. Remember all I've taught you. Use the equipment I have given you. Don't quit while the clock's still running."

The Fourth Quarter is now beginning for our AIMM team. Exciting moments lie ahead. There is ground to be gained. People to be set free. Setbacks and disappointments are only temporary. We serve a victorious Coach. Our part is to be obediently faithful to His directives.

Our opposition is not "flesh and blood" but the Kingdom of Darkness with its spiritual forces, its deceitful techniques, false ideas, corrupted values and enslaving strategies.

People's lives and eternal destinies may hinge on how well we "hang in there" for the Fourth Quarter. As one team manager said, "It's not over till it's over." In fact there is still time to join the team.



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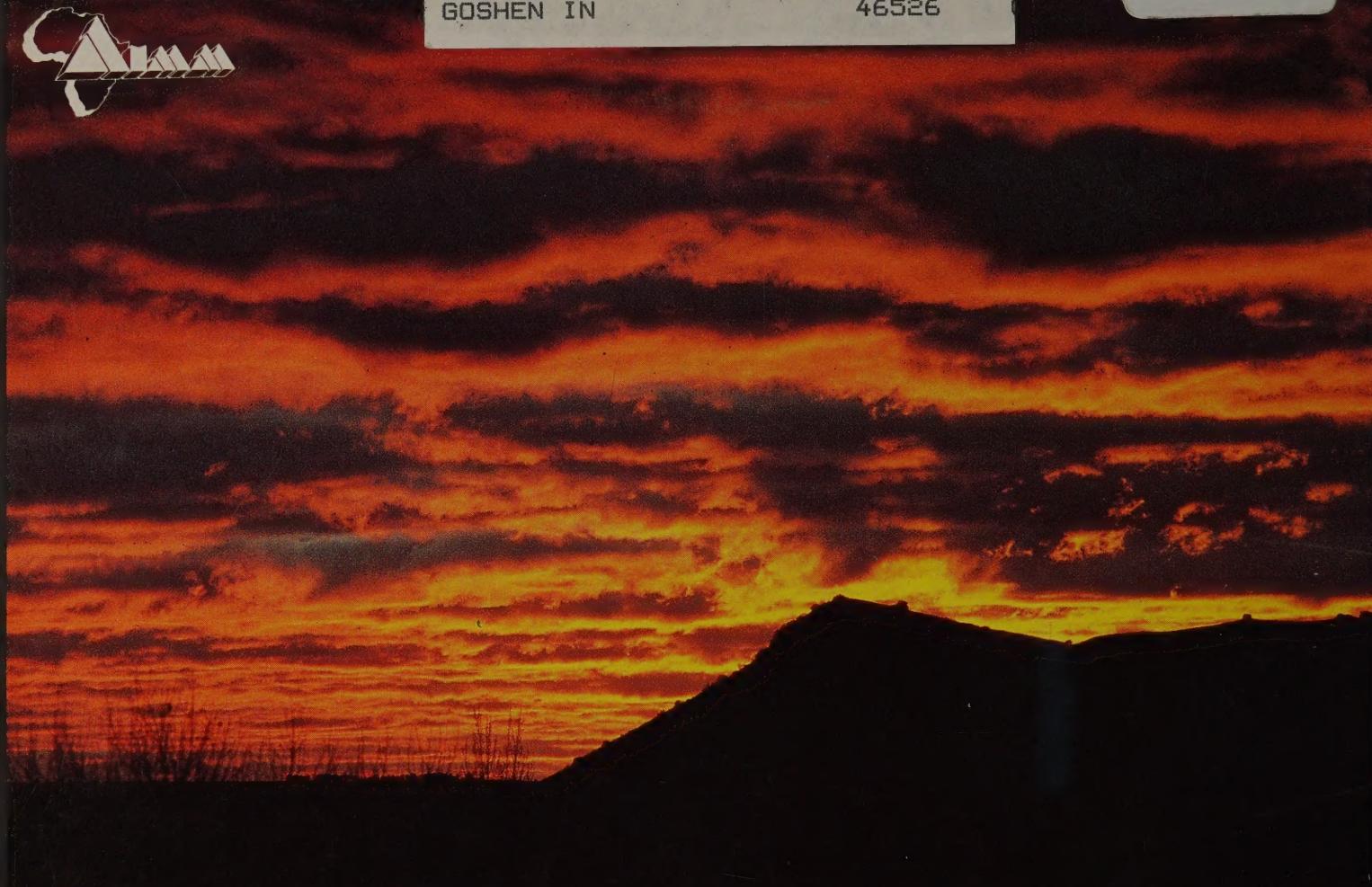
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As God his Son was sending
Into this world of sin,
His Son is now commanding
That we this world should win.
He sends us and commissions
To preach the Gospel clear.
To call upon all nations
To listen and to hear.

To Thee, O God, we're praying,
We're bent to do thy will.
Thy Word we are obeying
Thy glory we fulfill.
All peoples we are telling
To mend their sinful way,
That they might cease rebelling,
Lest judgment be their pay.

And if thou, Lord, desire
And should it be thy will
That we taste sword and fire
By those who thus would kill
Then comfort, pray, our loved ones
And tell them, we've endured
And we shall see them yonder—
Eternally secured.

Thy Word, O Lord, does teach us,
And we do understand;
Thy promises are with us
Until the very end.
Thou hast prepared a haven—
Praised be thy holy name,
We laud thee, God of heaven,
Through Christ, our Lord. Amen!

Tune: Lancashire
(Lead On, O King Eternal)